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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls

Enhancing the availability and use of data and gender-related statistics to support accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Chair's summary

1. On 20 March 2017, the Commission on the Status of Women held an interactive expert panel discussion on the topic "Enhancing availability and use of data and gender-related statistics to support accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The Vice-Chair of the Commission, Andreas Glossner, moderated the panel and made an introductory statement. The panellists were the Executive Deputy Director of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, Imelda Musana, who spoke on behalf of the Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development of Uganda, Janat Mukwaya; the Head of Research of the National Statistical Institute of Italy, Linda Laura Sabbadini; a Social Affairs Officer of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Lucia Scuro; the President of the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, Aija Žīgure; and an Executive Officer of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, Sian Phillips, who spoke on behalf of the Assistant Secretary and Principal Sector Specialist of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, Sarah Goulding. A total of 14 Member States and 10 civil society organizations contributed to the ensuing dialogue.

2. Participants in the panel discussion identified several good practices and lessons learned, challenges and gaps in the production, analysis and dissemination

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of data in the context of monitoring and accelerating the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda and highlighted priority areas for further action.

Gender statistics as a priority for accelerated implementation

3. Participants unanimously affirmed that improving the availability, accessibility and use of high-quality gender-related statistics and data disaggregated by sex was critical in order to effectively monitor progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda. The importance of the gender-responsive localization of targets and indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals and the need for regular collection and use of data to inform gender-responsive policies and track progress on global commitments on gender equality were strongly emphasized.

4. Several countries highlighted their efforts to integrate gender-related indicators into their national development plans and strategies. Some had identified a core set of national indicators, aligned with the global indicator framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, to monitor the implementation of national strategies. Institutional mechanisms, including inter-agency committees, working groups and commissions had been established to improve the collection and use of gender-related statistics.

5. Participants confirmed the critical role of national statistical offices in steering the production of high-quality gender-related statistics in national statistical systems and that of national gender equality mechanisms in ensuring the use of gender-sensitive indicators in national policymaking.

6. Participants underscored the important role of the Statistical Commission and its advisory mechanisms, such as the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, in setting standards and addressing the priorities of national statistical systems. Several Member States reaffirmed their strong and continued support for efforts to improve gender-related statistics, including through the new flagship-programme initiative of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) on the theme "Making every woman and girl count".

Innovations in the collection, availability and use of gender-related statistics

7. Several participants identified innovations in the collection and use of gender-related statistics, including the use of non-traditional sources of data, such as crowdsourcing and big data, in addition to administrative records, civil registration and qualitative methods. Examples were provided of the use of online databases, national reports and information management systems as ways to increase the dissemination and use of gender-related statistics.

8. Participants reported on such methodological developments as the individual deprivation measure, which is a new, gender-sensitive and multidimensional measure of poverty, aiming at overcoming the limitations of current approaches. Examples of methodological progress in tracking violence against women and improving the quality of data on persons with disabilities were also provided.

9. Participants welcomed advances at the global level to develop and enhance statistical standards and methodologies. For example, the Statistical Commission, at its forty-eighth session, in March 2017, adopted the International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics, which helps to strengthen the measurement of paid and unpaid care and domestic work. Examples were also provided of United Nations entities working together to close methodological gaps with regard to

Sustainable Development Goal indicators, such as those on legal frameworks, women in local government, gender-responsive budgeting, violence against women and unpaid work.

Strengthening partnerships between data users and producers

10. Speakers agreed on the relevance of partnerships between data producers and users, including civil society, for the production of better gender-related statistics and their use. Such efforts were crucial for closing data gaps and fostering better use of data to monitor gender-specific progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. The need for greater interregional cooperation was recognized.

11. Many participants emphasized that improving data production alone was not enough. Greater investments in statistical literacy and training programmes, along with stronger collaboration between national statistics offices, line ministries, academia and non-governmental organizations, in particular women's organizations, were necessary to ensure that high-quality gender-related statistics were used to inform evidence-based policies.

12. Participants highlighted the importance of creating alliances with civil society organizations to strengthen data production in areas such as informal employment, conduct studies on issues faced by young adolescent girls and boys, collect data on attitudes and perceptions of young women regarding violence and sexual harassment, leadership and education and conduct case studies on women in microfinance and entrepreneurship.

Gaps and challenges in gender-related statistics

13. Speakers agreed that the regular production, collection and use of gender-related statistics remained a significant challenge in several countries. Whereas gender equality considerations were prominently reflected in the indicator framework, many of the gender-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators currently did not have standards for measurement.

14. Participants voiced concern about the lack, or limited availability, of data disaggregated by, among other factors, sex, age and marital status, as a major challenge in fully capturing the intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination experienced by women and girls. Attention was required to close data gaps with regard to adolescent girls, older women, widowed women, women with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender women. The persistent data gaps in understanding the situation regarding violence against women and girls, including gender-based violence in politics, its extent and nature also required targeted action to strengthen methodological work and data collection.

15. Participants underscored that data collection at the national level remained irregular, hindering the effective monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals. Participants called for support in strengthening data collection at the local level, in particular in measuring women's participation in local governance. The need for data to be disaggregated at the subnational and local levels to reflect the regional diversity within and among countries was also highlighted.

16. Participants noted the importance of various efforts to close some of these data gaps, including current work to develop methodologies for measuring women's participation in local governments and the creation of a technical working group under the aegis of the Statistical Commission to improve age-disaggregated data.

Priorities to advance gender-related statistics

17. Participants identified several priorities for advancing the use of gender-related statistics in the context of accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda. Those included the need for greater capacity-building, increased investments and enhancing standards and methodologies for data use at the national, regional and international levels. Several participants called upon United Nations entities and the international statistical community to provide sustained technical and financial support to national institutions.

18. Participants called for strengthening the links between users and producers of gender-related statistics. Improving the analysis, interpretation and use of gender-related statistics for gender-responsive decision-making, through the training of policymakers and decision-makers, was critical.

19. Participants concluded that priority attention needed to be devoted to increasing data collection with regard to intersectionality and disaggregating data by sex, age, location, disability, sexual orientation, marital status and other types of discrimination to make visible and effectively address the intersecting inequalities that women and girls experience in order to ensure that no one is left behind.